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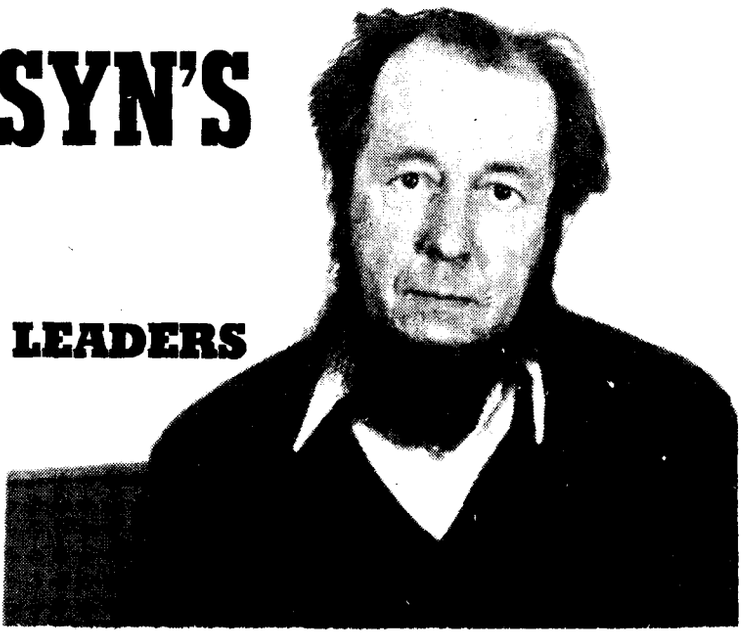

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NEWS & VIEWS

Wheeler-Dealer France

France's multi-billion dollar economic pact with Iran put the final nail in the coffin of the Kissinger proposal that consumer and producer nations cooperate on a broad front to meet each other's requirements and counter the new strategies of the oil-rich Arab world.

Henceforth, as the British deal of July 22 confirms further, it will be every country for itself.

In the opinion of *Le Monde*, all this is not France's blame, at least not entirely. "Most recently, the United States helped [the proposal's] demise," *Le Monde* commented, "when President Nixon concluded a deal with Israel and each of the four Arab countries he visited." France's action is merely to conclude "one more such deal on a scale which will make others jealous."

France's deal does not involve the securing of oil supplies, but Iranian money for French goods (with the tenuous promise of some additional oil eventually being made available).

The major advantage for France is that it will be receiving one-quarter of the money (roughly, $1 billion) in advance of delivering any goods and services. (Among the latter: installation of a 500,000-line telephone system and assistance in building in Teheran a subway system along lines of the Paris Metro.) The agreement thus amounts to a loan on enviably long terms at a time when oil-producing nations are lending for only short periods.

France is understandably elated over its deal, but the London *Economist* prescribes reservation of glee. The achievement, it says, "must be seen against the disappointments the French have met. Bilateral agreements signed with Saudi Arabia and Libya have provided neither oil nor firm orders. Negotiations with Kuwait and Abu Dhabi over French participation got nowhere, and nothing has been heard of a planned petrochemical deal with Iraq that was so proudly announced earlier this year."

The Economist's summing up: "France's attempts to secure its future oil supplies through bilateral deals with the Middle East producers have turned out to be a flop. . . . But its intense courting of these countries seems to be paying off in exports."

(Un)holy Year

The "Holy Year" proclaimed by Pope Paul for 1975 is meeting with widespread indifference, according to a multi-country survey conducted by *Overview*, the Chicago newsletter specializing in Catholic trends and opinions.

In Ireland, Catholics are reportedly viewing the Holy Year "with the same lack of interest . . . as they did the Year of Faith." British and Welsh Catholics are found to be turned off; ("no one seems at all bothered about indulgences or concerned to revive the exaggerated papolatry of the last century"). On the Continent, the prevailing mood is recorded as, "so what else is new?" Ditto, Australia.

Overview's toughest assessment comes with respect to American clerical attitudes:

"As far as most priests are concerned, the Holy Year does not even exist. The majority are not interested in going on pilgrimages. Only a minority will bother with clergy conferences or study days. Not very many will add anything to their own devotional life or the devotional life or the devotions of their people. The Holy Year, in other words, is a non-event, an exercise in pointless futility.

"There are a number of reasons for this non-involvement. While there may be nostalgic recollections of past enthusiasm for Holy Years

and Marian Years and other devotions, these practices were, in truth, of minor importance in the grassroots American parish even in preconciliar times. . . .

"Furthermore the prestige and credibility of the Papacy are at an all-time low among most priests. *Humanae Vitae* is the principal cause but the autocracy of Paul VI has turned off most American priests. If he wants to have his Holy Year—they say—let him have it, but we are not interested in him or it.

"Nor are priests sure what piety is anymore. The devotions of the past have been swept away, the new liturgy is at best an ambiguous success, the faithful are more likely to go to Communion when they're in church but less likely to be in church. What does the Holy Year have to do with anything in the lives of the priest or his people? It is not so much that it is irrelevant as it is useless. Why bother?

"A good number of priests are quite unaware of the theme of the Holy Year. If you ask them about reconciliation they may vaguely remember a letter from their bishop about it, but chances are they threw the letter in the same place all chancery-office mail goes. Reconciliation, priests will say, is a fine idea. But it won't be obtained by pastoral letters, acts of piety or Holy Years unless there are structural reforms. If the Pope wants reconciliation, let him change the structure of the church. Let him resign at 75 like he has made other bishops do. And if the bishops want reconciliation, let them take priests' senates seriously, and let them welcome back into the community of the faithful the resigned priests who have been thrown out."

Assist by Burger

It's helpful to have a friend at Court (even if it may not happen to guarantee your case).

The *New York Times*' Warren Weaver reports how Chief Justice Warren E. Burger thoughtfully filled in one of the rare oversights made by Attorney James D. St. Clair in his skillful, if specious, defense of President Nixon.

In last month's Supreme Court hearing on executive privilege, Justice Burger supplied Presidential lawyer St. Clair with an illustration that an absolute privilege may exist in given instances for certain public officials—such as Presidential privilege to withhold information — even though it is not mentioned in the Constitution.

"Mr. St. Clair," the Chief Justice observed, "you have not mentioned in your argument the holding of this Court in *Pierson v. Ray*, where the Court had no difficulty in concluding that it did not require an express constitutional provision to spell out an absolute privilege for judges."

"That's right," lawyer St. Clair replied gratefully.

Odds and Ends

—New Hampshire Governor Meldrim Thomson, Jr., regales audiences with the tale of a meeting between a farmer and Thomson's challenger in the state primary, State Senator David Nixon.

"Hello, I'm a politician," says the candidate.

"That's one strike against you," replies the farmer.

"And a lawyer," continues the candidate.

"That's two strikes," comments the farmer. "I'd ask your name, but I'm afraid you'd strike out."

"Nixon."

"That's three."

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Official Logic

East Orange, N.J.

To the Editors: If John Deedy's understanding was strained by the Newark archdiocese's response to the manner in which the *New York Times* handled our editorial on homosexuality [News & Views, June 14], perhaps it was because he remembered his own days as editor of a diocesan paper which liked to call itself "official." But if his conscience still bothers him, it is hardly fair to work out his problem at the expense of others.

The *New York Times* carried a correction because its headline reporting that "A Diocese Backs Homosexual Bill" (which was more than the editorial had done, for it in fact disclaimed competence to judge the merits of the bill) was false.

The Advocate has never claimed to speak for the archdiocese and in fact does not speak for the archdiocese. So Bishop Costello's statement was more than "technically correct," particularly so since the archdiocese has never engaged in the flip-flopping implied in Mr. Deedy's comment about the unofficial becoming official, depending on circumstances.

Further, the *Times* reporter had been advised not to identify *The Advocate* as "official" since we do not claim to be official.

If Mr. Deedy finds it hard to believe that one can espouse a principle without opposing a stand taken by others on specifics of a particular piece of legislation, then perhaps he would do well to take a course in logic.

JOSEPH R. THOMAS
Managing Editor,
The Advocate

Novakian Logic

Sommers, Conn.

To the Editors: Congratulations to Michael Novak on his marvelous "put-on" in the June 28, 1974 issue. I'm sure

(Continued on page 439)

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HUNGER AT HOME

Our July 12th issue was devoted to the subject of World Hunger, concentrating on the grim prospect of a global food shortage, with particular attention to the plight of the developing nations. No one should imagine, however, that hunger is a problem foreign to the United States, as was amply demonstrated at the recent hearings of Senator George McGovern's Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs. On the contrary, the needy in America are worse off than they were five years ago—so much so that a substantial number of families in urban poverty areas are said to be eating cat and dog food for needed protein. Total spending for federal food programs rose sharply in these years, but it was not enough; in the same five-year period, for example, while welfare allotments for a family of four rose 14.5 percent, the cost of food in the government "economy plan" basket rose by 41.7 percent. In the same way, according to the experts who wrote the Senate group's report, food expenses for the needy and the aged participating in the food stamp program increased 22.6 percent more rapidly than the size of their food stamp allotments. Despite the increased government spending and expanded programs, then, "Five years after President Nixon's promise to end hunger in America, the nation's needy are hungrier and poorer."

World stockpiles of food are at a dangerously low point, and if the danger of mass starvation in Africa is now somewhat lessened, it has not disappeared. But the plight of the poor in this country is not the world shortage of food—it is their shortage of money. The food is in the American supermarkets; the poor just can't afford it. The sad fact is that inflation is hitting America's needy far harder than anyone else, for several reasons. For one thing, the prices of such basic "poor" foods as rice and beans have increased much faster than those of middle-class foods; in less than four years, the price of dried beans rose by 256.3 percent and that of rice by 124.3 percent, while the cost of sirloin steak rose by only 38.9 percent and lamb chops by 31.3 percent. Secondly, the poor cannot shift to cheaper foods as those in the middle-class are doing these days, because they are already eating the cheapest food available; they have nowhere

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else to go. And finally, the poor always have to spend a proportionately larger share of their income on food than the upper and middle classes. These three factors leave the poor little flexibility, and for them survival often involves a hard choice between using money for rent or medical care or food.

Some short-term measures to aid the hungry in America are possible. Although the food stamp program is far from being an unqualified success, it is better than nothing. Of the 37 million people eligible, however, only 35.7 percent now receive stamps. Many who are eligible are unaware of the help available; others find the program too expensive. The requirement that families pay sizable sums in cash each month in order to participate poses great difficulties for many poor people who out of necessity live very much on a day-to-day basis. The cost of participating in the program should therefore be reduced. Further, getting the stamps is a time-consuming and sometimes a humiliating process; on both points administration of the plan should be improved.

Anything, in short, that could help America's poor on an immediate basis should be done. This is particularly important because, the Committee notes, the inflationary price spiral that has already drastically affected the poor is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. But in the long run the problem of hunger in the richest nation in the world should be seen for what it is: a gross maldistribution of national income that will require a political solution. The rich in this country are very, very rich; the poor are very, very poor. One of the working papers submitted to the Senate Select Committee put it this way: "In a nation in which the wealthiest 1 percent possess more than eight times the wealth of the bottom 50 percent, in which the percentage of national income going to the lowest fifth of the population has remained the same for 45 years, and in which 40 million people remain poor or near-poor, more than a food stamp or child-feeding program is at issue. . . . The food program cannot end their poverty, and fundamentally people are hungry because they are poor." Short-term help is essential, but beyond that we need a much-discussed but never-achieved goal: what the Select Committee report calls a just, dignified income-maintenance program—one ensuring that no person in this country lives without adequate income. As Senator McGovern's Committee strives to create a comprehensive National Nutrition Policy, the first plank in our national platform should clearly be this: dog food is for dogs.

THE LAST ACT

With the Supreme Court's landmark ruling on executive privilege, and the concomitant decision to let stand the Watergate grand jury's naming of Richard Nixon as a co-conspirator in the cover-up, the string pretty much ran out for this President. The full House and the Senate have yet to play their roles with respect to the bill of particulars drawn up by the House Judiciary Committee. Nevertheless, the impeachment proceedings are taking on an increasingly anti-climactic quality. Events are sweeping towards a conclusion fateful for the nation and fatal, politically, for Richard Milhous Nixon.

"Only a miracle is going to save the President. He's had it," says House Majority Leader Thomas P. O'Neill of Massachusetts. The comment may be infelicitous given the upcoming proceedings in the House and O'Neill's theoretically non-partisan responsibilities therein. But it appears accurate enough. His defenses stripped, about all that could rescue Richard Nixon now may be a fortuitous response to appeals based on the lesser of evils—that to suffer two last years of Nixon may be easier for nation and people than to endure the corrective.

Impeachment's last act is not going to be painless for anyone, and indeed the easy course, as Nixon used to say about Vietnam, might be to chuck it all. The thought is the more tempting since for all practical purposes Nixon is neutralized for the duration of his term and fixed for history. On the other hand, to pull up short now will only be to dose the country with more of the cynicism that made Watergate possible in the first place.

Of course, Richard Nixon could spare the country the travail that is allegedly worrying his surrogates so much. He could still resign. Only the bloodthirsty would begrudge him that out. The nation could pick up the pieces, and he could hie to his coastal estates. Few would bother him there, much less bug him that San Clemente is promised to the United States. Who wants it? What could it ever serve other than as a reminder of a perfidious President?

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Learning About the Family in Tanzania

"O TANU, O Tanzania" were the only two words I could pronounce in a Swahili song that spontaneously became the theme song of *Familia '74*, a two-week World Assembly of the Family at the University of Dar-es-salaam, June 19-27. Tanu is the political party of Tanzania. The song was taught by villagers to one of the thirty Assembly groups which visited Ujamaa villages which are the cornerstone of one of the most exciting political experiments in the Third World.

TANU, Tanzania, and Ujamaa are all put together by its charismatic President, Julius K. Nyerere. The fact that the University of Dar was hosting *Familia '74*

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and the Sixth Pan African Congress simultaneously says something about the excitement which Nyerere has created. He is a visionary who believes that illiterate and short-lived villagers can, through pooling their labor in these Ujamaa (familyhood) enclaves, achieve self-respect and dignity as they lift themselves up without the patronizing arms of Big Brother or Dutch uncles. No one is saying that it can be done. People like myself who traveled to Dar stood in wonderment of a dreamer who thinks a nation can be built on the gospel image of man in the context of a Tanzanian version of a socialist state.

The World Assembly of the Family chose Tanzania for its meeting because the leaders believed that they might glean insight into the extended family concept from visiting the Ujamaa villages. The Assembly itself was a two-week version of an extended family. There were 250 delegates from 54 nations brought together by the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements and the Family Education Office of the World Council of Churches with financial help from the United Nations.

The Assembly did not aim to make resolutions about the family but rather to create a people-to-people atmosphere in which people could share their concerns about the family as it is challenged by the population explosion, the uneven development of economies, the theologies of marriage, education and the changing statuses of the sexes. The assembly had three phases. First in groups of eight with a university student as an interpreter the delegates fanned out to 30 villages as far as three or four hundred miles from the capital to spend two days with villagers. The second phase was the marketplace back at the University where delegates could shop around among the delegates who would cluster around issues or simply pick the brains of experts like the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, or the UN population expert, Arthur McCormack.

The final and least productive phase was trying to pull the experiences together in the form of conclusions, if not resolutions. In no way could this family assembly draw conclusions. They were overwhelmed from their interaction with the delegates from the five continents as well as the cultural shock for the non-African delegates as well as for Africans relating to affluent people. It was my first experience of seeing how Americans can be offensive without trying. Somehow we feel that we have the answers. It is part of our psyche.

The family themes as such were eclipsed by TANU, Tanzania, Ujamaa and Nyerere. The basic document, the magna carta of Tanzania, is the Arusha Declaration of 1967, subtitled TANU's policy on socialism and self-reliance. The opening sentence reads: "The policy of TANU is to build a socialist state." Then it proceeds to outline the rights of every individual like Pope John in *Pacem in Terris*. But unlike *Pacem in Terris* it is very clear how Tanzania or TANU sees these rights being achieved. The Declaration is very clear about gifts, loans and private investment, that is, Greeks bearing gifts. "It is stupid to rely on money as the major instrument of development when we know only too well that our country is poor. It is equally stupid, indeed it is even more stupid, for us to imagine that we shall rid ourselves of our poverty through foreign financial assistance rather than our own financial resources."

Nyerere passionately believes that "the development of a country is brought about by people, not by money." The peasant must learn to work hard and work together with the primitive tools he has. Through the savings of the village which are administered by the village TANU committee and the help of the government a well can be dug, a dispensary can be opened, and more children can be given a primary school education.

For North American delegates like myself the visit to the Ujamaa village was traumatic. After we met with the local TANU committee we joined in the communal work of the day, which was building a house. We used the primitive tools that could be no different from those of Joseph and Jesus. I took the dirt out of the hole for the upright with my hand. The depth of the hole was to be arm length. The boards were not cut but hacked. The sisson strips used for lattice were tied with green strings, possibly from maize plants. I instantly qualified as a builder. My only limitation was an inability to sing the Swahili chants as we worked together.

I presume I was in a more advanced Ujamaa village. There was a well, a milling machine, a dispensary which does not eliminate disease and a high infant mortality rate and a school that can take only 25 percent of the children. Yet as I stood outside the school with its rough desks facing into the open court Paulo Freire became eloquent: "The whole village is the educator, not this school building. The Ujamaa village teaches people to share, to hope, to create a future. This is what Christianity is about and why I am a Christian." He sees capitalism and Christianity as irreconcilable. This was his second trip to Tanzania. He will be back in 1975 to teach at the University. He told the villagers that this is where he would like to die.

For a family movement to immerse itself in another culture and another political system makes sense. It forces all to look at their family values with new lenses. I would recommend to the bar, medical and dental associations to have their annual conventions close to the Ujamaa villages. DENNIS J. GEANEY

(Father Dennis J. Geaney, O.S.A., is Director of Field Education at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.)

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THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

Feminist conferences, I regret to say, can be just as rigidly structured, and riddled with competition and the efforts to establish a pecking order as their male counterparts, so it was with some sense of relief that I arrived in Rome after attending the world conference on "Sexism in the 1970's" in Berlin. Rome, with all her faults, is soothing to the senses, and humane in many little, unexpected ways. (In a queer way, for instance, one's self-esteem returns in haggling over tips and taxi-fares, after being gravely and haughtily reproved by German porters and drivers for not knowing what is 'correct.')

I visited the spacious modern generalate of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur off the Cassia northwest of Rome, where the air is beautifully clear and one can see the Apennines on the horizon. There are sheep bleating and cocks crowing on the few farms left in an area rapidly being suburbanized. The sisters use the generalate for a renewal center for English-speaking nuns of all congregations. Japanese, African, Australian, English, American, they are sent to study liturgy, theology and the effects of change. The atmosphere is restful and, at the same time, charged with a sense of fresh discovery.

It was a happy place in which to stumble across the dissertation of Father Paul Molinari, S.J.—director of the institute—which is a study of Julian of Norwich with special attention to Julian's teaching about God's "homely loving" and the concept of God as our *mother*. The conference on sexism dwelt, as conferences on sexism must, on semantics, on the way in which "generic language and stereotyped roles inhibit the development of persons." The maleness of God implied in so much of our theological language and in our prayers is one aspect of the effect of generic language. Inevitably the conference in its report called on the World Council of Churches, its convener, "to help eliminate sexist language, concepts, and imagery" used by its speakers, writers, and Bible translators (The conference had had its own troubles with language: "sexism" turns out to be untranslatable in German, and one French paper reported the title of the conference as "Sex for Women over 70"!).

We have indeed lost familiarity, as Father Molinari says, with the idea that God is our Mother as well as our Father, but it was an idea quite familiar to the mystics of the Middle Ages and the idea can even be found in the fathers of the church—St. John Chrysostom, for instance. It may well be that the middle stages of evolving modern tongues were more flexible in the use of gender and more malleable to the thought.

Julian of Norwich considered God as Mother and as the fount and origin of all motherhood: "This fair lovely word Mother, it is so sweet and so kind itself that it may not verily be said of none but of him . . ." She especially sees motherhood in the second person of the trinity for, like all medieval mystics, she was passionately devoted to the reality of the divine personhood of Jesus:

"And thus is Jesus our Very Mother in kind (by virtue) of our first making; and he is our Very Mother in Grace, by taking our kind made. All the fair working, and all the sweet natural office of dearworthy Motherhood is appropriate to the Second Person: . . .

I understood three manners of beholding of Motherhood in God: the first is grounded in our kind making; the second is taking of our King—and there beginneth the Motherhood of Grace; the third is Motherhood of working— and therein is a forthspreading by the same Grace, of length and breadth and of height and of deepness without end.

—And all is one Love," Julian, Ch. 59

As Father Molinari points out, Julian was not singular in pursuing this concept. It was a devotion in her time and had been developed in Benedictine tradition. One of the famous texts is by St. Anselm of Canterbury; the idea is also developed in the *Ancren Rewle*, a book specifically written for anchoresses like Julian but much before her time. It is found in mystics of other countries like Marguerite d'Oyngt and Mechtilde v. Hackeborn so it is not just a regional quirk of thought.

Finally, Father Molinari points out that scholars like Cassabut have made it clear that the idea of the motherhood of God is firmly founded in Scripture. "Several times, in the Old Testament, in order to teach men how great is his love for his people, God compares himself to a mother," and Jesus said in Matthew, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often have I been ready to gather thy children together, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings; and thou didst refuse it."

Of course, the most marvelous and —horrible as the word is—non-sexist language is that of Julian who sees the motherly and womanly aspect of God in this:

"For we shall see verily in heaven, without end, that we have grievously sinned in this life, and notwithstanding this, we shall see that we were never hurt in his love, nor were never the less of price in his sight. And by the assay of this falling we shall have an high marvelous knowing of love in God without end. For hard and marvelous is that love which may not, now will not, be broken for trespass."

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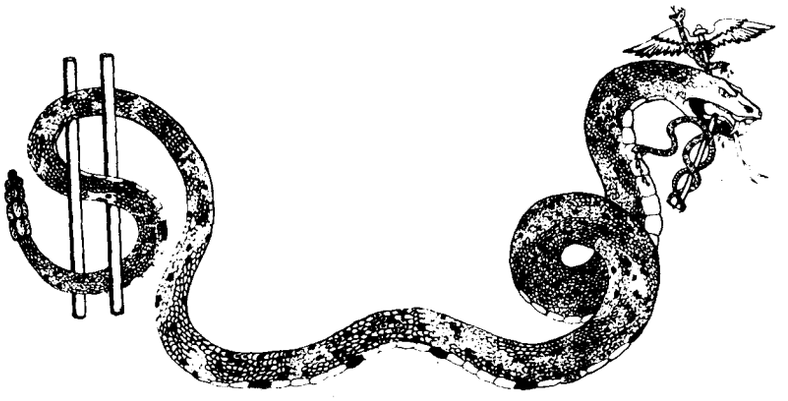
Rx FOR HEALTH CARE

MARK R. ARNOLD



Runaway health-care costs are a central problem

The major obstacle to enactment of comprehensive national health insurance this year may not be Congress' preoccupation with impeachment of the President or even the fact that organized labor, long the wellspring of such legislation, would prefer to await the election of a possible "veto-proof" Democratic-dominated Congress in November rather than support the kind of legislation dependent on a Nixon signature to become law in 1974. The big obstacle is inflation. Runaway health care costs are stripping the luster from real national health insurance, making comprehensive protection both more necessary and less affordable with every upward lunge of the Consumer Price Index.

If health sector inflation fulfills the predictions of even the usually timid Nixon Administration economists, we may have to settle for a stripped-down program offering little more than a shield against so-called "catastrophic" illnesses or accidents rather than the more inclusive benefit packages that only a relatively few weeks ago seemed within Congress' grasp. Federal Cost-of-Living Director John Dunlop, the Government's wage-price traffic cop, had hoped to keep a lid on volatile health sector prices even after controls over the rest of the economy expired April 30. But Congressional Democrats and Republicans alike lined up solidly against continuation of any economic reins, so the controls package died—and with it Dunlop's hopes of moderating the rate of inflation in medical care and hospital charges pending enactment of permanent cost constraints as part of national health insurance.

The problem in a nutshell is this: Prior to the imposition of wage-price controls in mid-1971, the health industry was the most inflationary sector of the U.S. economy. Controls lowered the increase in medical care prices from an annual rate of from 6.3 to 7.1 percent a year (1967-71) to an annual rate of 3.4 percent (November 71-January 73).

Now those costs are soaring again. Economists were resigned to allowing a 10 percent hike in health care prices in the next fiscal year if controls continued. Without controls, they're now adding 5 percent to their health inflation calculations, for a total inflation rate boost of 15 percent. And they foresee a similar 15 percent hike the following year. Moreover, Dunlop argues, the numbers may understate the actual increase if health care providers scramble to establish a higher base price in anticipation of a cost hold-down under health insurance.

In testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee April 24, Casper Weinberger, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), acknowledged: "If we are hit by annual increases in the range forecast by the Cost of Living Council, our current cost estimates for *any* (emphasis added) plan would be far too low."

That's tough medicine. For the two new plans that have revived hopes for enactment of national health insurance appear on close inspection to offer considerably less in the way of benefits than many Americans have come to expect from all the talk about national health protection in recent years. And the escalation in health prices may leave policy-makers no choice but to either scale down benefits still further or raise their proposed schedule of premiums to finance the programs. Neither prospect is likely to be warmly greeted by workers who see the purchasing power of their paychecks shrink

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week by week as a result of today's "double-digit" inflation.

Let's back up a bit. In the beginning there was S.3—Senator Kennedy's labor-backed "cradle-to-the-grave" health insurance scheme. Its central feature: Virtually complete coverage of all health care costs. Its chief drawback: An astromomical $80 billion price tag that made it anathema to most lawmakers. Only slightly less anathema to many lawmakers was the fact that it would deal a death blow to the private health insurance industry. With financing and administration through the Social Security system, private carriers would simply be done out of a job.

There were other entries in the health-insurance derby, of course: The American Medical Association's "Medicredit" plan, providing federal refunds for voluntarily purchased private health insurance; the health insurance industry's package of tax incentives for companies and industries to purchase government-approved private policies, and others. But all had drawbacks, and none went very far toward controlling costs or encouraging more rational health-care delivery systems such as health maintenance organizations.

This year, two things happened. First, in February, the White House unveiled its Comprehensive Health Insurance Act (CHIP), a vastly improved package over the Administration's 1971 entry. This was followed a few weeks later by an alternative—the Comprehensive Nation Health Insurance Act—pulled together from the Nixon plan, Medicare, S.3 and other sources by Kennedy and Wilbur Mills, the powerful Ways and Means Committee chairman who is the House's key figure on health and tax legislation.

Both new plans would place a roof over medical and hospital bills for most Americans. They would also provide help that millions now lack in paying for treatment below the ceiling. But to keep costs down, both plans are heavily laden with deductibles and co-insurance requirements—thus retaining one of the worst features of the present health care system: its tendency to ration medical care by income.

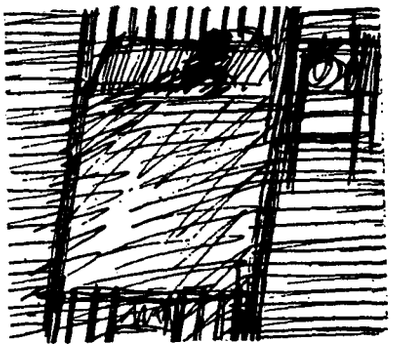
The Nixon plan is actually three separate plans with identical benefit packages but different cost-sharing features: An Employe Health Insurance Plan for workers and their families; an Assisted Health Insurance Plan for the poor, disabled, and high medical risks; and a Federal Health Care Benefits program for the elderly, replacing Medicare but — unaccountably — carrying higher cost-sharing requirements by beneficiaries than Medicare does now.

For the sake of simplicity, this discussion will focus on the Employe Health Insurance Plan—the program that would affect most Americans. Leaving aside for the moment the question of financing, here's how the benefit package would work:

A family would pay a minimum of $450 in medical and hospital bills in any year (400 for a two-person family) before qualifying for any benefits, then 25 percent of additional charges up to a limit of $1,500. Thereafter the plan's "catastrophic" feature would pay all costs for covered services. Between the $450 figure and the $1,500 in out-of-pocket expenses, the plan would pay 75 percent of costs for covered services.

A couple of caveats are in order. First, the $450 deductible is deceptive. The rule is that a family is eligible for the plan's 75 percent co-payment only after three family members have run up bills of $150 per person. If one family member runs up an $800 bill, you're out of luck; better his expenses should exceed $1,500. From then on, the plan will take over the payments.

Second, the legislation doesn't count just any medical bills in figuring whether you've reached the deductible —only those for "approved" services. Your actual bills may be considerably higher, since approved services exclude such expenses as routine physical exams, and adult dental care, and limits reimbursement for mental



health services. Moreover, even if your bills for approved services qualify you for benefits, the plan won't pay for noncovered services, so your family's total health bill may go considerably higher than $1,500 a year.

The Kennedy-Mills plan has some of the same shortcomings. It carries a more liberal $300 per family deductible (two persons must run up bills of $150 each for covered services) before its 25 percent co-insurance feature—identical to that in the Nixon plan—comes into play. Its catastrophic feature cuts in sooner, at $1,000, but likewise carries some exclusions and limitations. Both the lid and the cost-sharing requirements are scaled down for persons of lower income.

Covered services in both plans are, it should be added, fairly comprehensive. They include unlimited hospital and physician care, preventive care for children up to age 13, and a host of other services such as prosthetic devices, X-rays, and laboratory tests. Outpatient drugs are subject to a separate $50 per person deductible in the Nixon plan, $1 per prescription co-payment under Kennedy-Mills.

One appealing feature of the Kennedy-Mills plan is its implicit encouragement to preventive care for chil-

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dren. Dental, eye, and ear care up to age 13, prenatal care and family planning services would not be subject to the deductible.

There's no question that either of the plans would benefit millions of Americans. Some 25 million Americans have no health insurance at all; less than half those under 65 are protected against catastrophic costs and almost none of those over 65 have such protection. Moreover, most plans typically exclude preventive services, outpatient services, and drugs. Private insurers are seemingly more interested in protecting against sickness than in trying to keep people well.

Nevertheless, both plans can be faulted for failing to go far enough to relate benefits to income. Cost considerations will continue to inhibit many families from seeking good medical care. As Rashi Fein, the noted Harvard medical economist, observed in a recent newspaper article examining the Nixon proposal:

"A working family with income of $7,500 would have a maximum liability of 20 percent of income [$1,500], while one with income of $15,000 would have a 10 percent ceiling, and one with income of $75,000 would have a 2 percent ceiling. Nor are the ceilings adjusted in any way to take account of family size and thus of other demands on income."

Both plans have income-related premium provisions for lower-income families: those with roughly $7,500 in family income in the Nixon program, $8,800 in the Kennedy-Mills plan. It's the middle-income Americans—incomes $9,000 to $20,000—who will bear the brunt of the new program's costs. They'll pay the bulk of the premiums; only one out of four will have expenses sufficient to derive any benefits, according to a Kennedy staff calculation.

"Hell, millions of Americans have better coverage under union contracts now," scoffs Max Fine, executive director of the Committee for National Health Insurance, a labor-backed lobbying group. "What you're doing [in these programs] is adding $600 to the average family's bills in premiums, knowing full well that most of them won't be sick enough to get any of it back."

True enough, but that's the way insurance works. But, retorts Fine, most insurance isn't compulsory. The Kennedy-Mills plan is. The Nixon plan is not; though employers would have to offer it to their workers, no one would be forced to buy in.

Fine's group, like the AFL-CIO that supports it, favors Kennedy's old S.3, which at considerably higher premiums would have paid virtually all medical care costs without deductibles and co-insurance. Though that measure, the Health Security Act, had little support in Congress, it did have the wholehearted backing of organized labor. AFL-CIO chief George Meany argues it is better to pass no bill this year than a half-a-loaf version. Next year's "veto-proof" Democratic Congress can then proceed to enact S.3.

The problem with the Health Security Act—aside from its financing through the already overburdened Social Security tax—lies partly in its price tag ($70 to $80 billion in 1975), and partly in its effect on the demand for medical services.

As the Administration's Dr. Stuart H. Altman sees it, "a system without deductible and co-insurance isn't a better system, it's a worse system." Adds Altman, who oversees health planning in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare: "When you take away these stabilizers you generate pressures to over-use the system, which results in larger bills and brings down demands for greater governmental regulation."

Ideology or Economics

Such complaints are dismissed by many liberals as smacking more of conservative ideology than of medical economics, but the notorious early experience of the medicare and medicaid programs would seem to bear them out. As the Federation of American Scientists noted in a recent newsletter devoted to health insurance:

"The effect of these two programs (Medicare and Medicaid), enacted in the mid-sixties was to stimulate an extraordinary inflation in health costs. The reason was simple enough. The old and the poor constituted an enormous pool of previously unfinanced health care needs. Once their needs began to be financed, demand for health care jumped still farther ahead of supply."

Of course, part of the problem was that reimbursement was on a cost-plus basis. Doctors were compensated for "reasonable charges"—a term that came to mean whatever the traffic would bear. Secure in the knowledge that their patients wouldn't have to pay the whole bill, their charges rose.

The F.A.S. study concludes that the larger the third party share of the health care payment, the higher the cost of the service. "Increasingly," says the study, "one party gets the services, one party provides them and a third party pays for them. Under these circumstances virtually no market mechanism is left. Doctors, who are only human, find it all too easy to put in charges freely, to let 'customary charges' rise and to encourage more visits."

Both the Nixon and Mills-Kennedy plans have safeguards against medical inflation. Hospitals will be required to engage in prospective budgeting for reimbursement purposes; doctors' fees will be set by peer review panels (Professional Standards Review Organizations or PSROs) and, in theory anyway, monitored closely. Yet there's also something to be said for the Administration's argument that cost-sharing—by giving consumers a stake in minimizing medical charges—will tend to dampen pressures for health care inflation.

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The negative side of the cost-sharing requirement, as we have seen, is that it rations medical care utilization by income so long as the cost-sharing itself is not truly progressive.

A word about financing: Here the difference between the Nixon plan and the joint proposal are radical.

CHIP—the Administration plan—would require employers to provide group health insurance for workers and pay 75 percent of the premiums. Insurance would be purchased from private companies meeting federal standards. Premiums would be based on the experience of the work group. The 25 percent premium cost borne by the average worker earning $10,000 would cost him about $125 a year. State and federal funds would pay premiums for the poor.

Under Kennedy-Mills, a revamped Social Security Administration, reporting to the President, would serve as the nation's health insurer. High payroll taxes, not private insurance premiums, would bankroll the system, with employes paying an additional 1 percent and employers an additional 3 percent in payroll taxes on the first $20,000 of wages. The self-employed would pay a 2.5 percent tax on $20,000 of income. A $10,000-a-year worker would pay $100 more in Social Security than he does now.

With the government providing the insurance, Kennedy-Mills would use insurance companies primarily to process claims on a cost-reimbursable basis as it does with Medicare. Companies could offer supplementary policies, covering deductibles and co-insurance. But essentially the government would take over their role, and only a handful of the largest companies would be able to survive in the health-insurance business.

Both these approaches have their failings. The Democratic plan, by levying a huge new tax on payrolls, would make the overburdened Social Security tax more regressive than ever. The Nixon plan's reliance on established insurance principles, such as pegging premiums to claims experience, could discourage employers from hiring older or handicapped workers. In addition, the Democratic plan opts for federal regulation and a unifom national benefit payments standard for reimbursement; the Nixon plan leans toward state control, which has long been weak in the insurance field, and state-approved premium and fee reimbursement levels that will make for continued disparities in medical care costs from one state to another.

"If it costs less to deliver a certain standard of health care in Tennessee than in New York, why should we insist that it cost the same?" asks HEW's Stu Altman. "Why should Tennessee subsidize New York's high prices with their premiums? Better that New Yorkers, seeing that Tennesseans pay less for identical quality service, take steps to control their costs."

Cost is the name of the health insurance game. It is also the reason that Louisiana's Russell Long, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and committee member Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut are still fighting for their own health insurance offering—the Catastrophic Health Insurance and Medical Assistance Reform Act. The Long-Ribicoff measure, which has 24 Senate co-sponsors, would raise Social Security taxes by 0.3 percent for employer and employe alike—$30 a year for the average worker. In return, no one covered by Social Security would have to pay more than $2,000 a year in medical and hospital bills.

Medical care reformers heap scorn on the Long-Ribicoff plan. By rewarding high health-care costs through federal reimbursement, "it attacks the system from the wrong end," says Stan Jones, Kennedy's top health staffer and former director of health management policy at HEW. Adds cradle-to-the grave advocate Max Fine: "The private health industry can handle catastrophic coverage; what it has shown it can't handle are the basic medical expenses that are killing the working man. Long-Ribicoff does nothing about those. It is exactly the opposite of a rational health insurance program."

Mills began hearings on health insurance in April, originally aiming for House passage of a bill by midsummer. Long's timetable is less advanced, but he too has pledged to report a bill in time for Senate passage this year.

All the proposals, in the view of this reporter anyway, have shortcomings. S.3 is politically unrealistic and, even if it weren't, would probably prove highly inflationary. The Nixon and Kennedy-Mills plans are politically appealing but retain several regressive features. And inflation is eroding the delicate balance of premiums and benefits on which their promise depends.

With Long and Mills wedded to rival approaches to national health insurance, in the end it will probably come down to a mixture of versions—or a Senate-House deadlock yielding nothing at all. The former might be fortuitous, the latter tragic. For time, given current inflationary trends, is national health insurance's real enemy. Each delay, by making a comprehensive package more costly, also makes its realization less likely. It may take more than a veto-proof Congress to undo the damage.

Summer Schedule

In keeping with the usual practice, *Commonweal* is again appearing on alternate weeks during the summer months. Forthcoming issues will be dated August 23, September 6 and September 20. From then on we will resume our normal weekly publishing schedule.

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selected responses

ABORTION AND THE LAW

Commonweal's *May 31 issue on abortion produced an unusually heavy reader-response. Below are representative excerpts of some of the letters received.* THE EDITORS

Fairfield, Conn.

To the Editors: Fr. Degnan ["Law, Morals and Abortion," May 31] starts his argument from a distinction that cannot be sustained. For there is not a "difference between the claims of the developing human in the early stages of human gestation and in the latter months before birth . . . a moral as well as a physical one." Biologically (the metaphysics of "ensoulment" eludes me) it is the genetic pattern, present in the nucleic acids of every cell in a human being as long as that human lives that establishes the unique humanity of that being; and that pattern is established at conception, not one minute later. After *conception,* "only growth is to come." But it cannot be uncertainty on the facts of human development that leads Fr. Degnan to attempt this distinction. I think that his effort here is to save a favored notion of "the law," and that the inconsistencies in his discussion follow from that notion.

"It is the aim of law to organize human society by creating a structure of just relationships among men," Fr. Degnan maintains. That is, of course, true, since the root notion of "justice" is simply the equality before the law possessed by all citizens of a political association. The essence of justice is that like cases are treated alike, that all men (no matter what other inequalities differentiate them) fall equally under "the long still grasp of law, not changing with the strong man's pleasure"—as Euripides put it. But Fr. Degnan goes on to import an entire morality into this conception. Suddenly we find that any legal system comes equipped with an enormous freight of "moral and legal debts" including the rights to life, education, friendship, and liberty, and that such "rights" are so important that their recognition must not depend on private choice—"all of human life and its achievements" will be endangered if the law does not protect them.

But those "debts" he mentions are not "rights" in any system of law I know of, unless by "right" we mean "anything desirable." The law is concerned with peace and order; it is *not* concerned with human life or other human goods. The law forbids violence, because it is disruptive, and theft because it causes trouble and conflict. Law in its original and definitive form makes forfeit the *life* of one who steals another's *property* (forfeit to the property-owner if private property, forfeit to God and the community in cases of sacrilege). Almost in spite of the law, the creation of a system of law results in the preservation of human life; for, for every poor man whose life is forfeit under law because he robbed the rich, there are a hundred rich men who in the absence of law will prey on the poor and the semi-rich without mercy, causing endless feuds, bloodshed and famine. One of the *functions* of law is to preserve life, exactly as one of its functions is to increase prosperity in the society, but these functions should not be confused with the purpose and root notion of law. The law came into existence to protect property; property relationships define the scope and purpose of law.

An established society can, of course, *choose* to protect human life by law, as it can choose to protect sacred cows, wetlands, the Communist Party and the Catholic Church. But I don't know any society that has done so. American law leaves peace-keeping to the several states, whose job it is to keep disruption and chaos to a minimum. If laws aiming to preserve human life seem likely to keep the peace, the state will enforce them, and make manslaughter (e.g.) a felony; but if laws aiming to destroy human life seem likely to keep the peace, the state will enforce *them,* and provide public places of execution for its official killing. On a national level, I don't think it has ever occurred to our legislators to condemn *all* official killing of humans; they simply oppose this or that means of killing as inhumane, or this or that death-dealing operation as bad foreign policy. Fr. Degnan's apparent belief that this society in general protects, or aims to protect, human life by law is so wide of the mark as to distort any argument that incorporates it. There is *no* presupposition in favor of preserving human life in the law of this society; the Constitution says only that no person shall be deprived of life *without due process of law.* Well, we've had due process in the abortion issue, all the way to the Supreme Court itself; *Wade* was the outcome, and that settles that. Possibly the decision will in fact accomplish the aim and function of the law; it will lead to less conflict and disruption, *and* result in the preservation of life by putting the illicit and unskilled abortion-peddlers out of business. It would not be the first time that laws aimed at permitting the destruction of human beings functioned in practice to save lives.

LISA NEWTON
Fairfield University

Valparaiso, Ind.

To the Editors: As an addendum to your incisive May 31 editorial and articles on abortion, let me suggest that

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we keep the following in mind during any future abortion law "bargaining": It seems to me that political evidence shows that only those who care about human life from conception and under almost all circumstances care about it *intensely* at any stage and under any circumstances. For example, I find it exceedingly noteworthy that the many groups who claimed to believe that life begins at some point after conception have done nothing politically significant to reverse the Supreme Court's decision by a Constitutional amendment protecting life at least in the later stages of pregnancy. Why have those who said, e.g., that life begins at viability not been in the streets expressing their horror at the *post*-viability abortions authorized by the Court? According to their *own* definition, human life is being taken virtually on demand; yet they do not mobilize in its defense. This inaction is explicable, I submit, only if (as a general rule, with some exceptions) anyone who cares passionately about human life will recognize that it exists from conception, and anyone who claims that it begins later really does not care much about it to begin with.

From this I conclude that we should not bargain on abortion under the mistaken assumption that most of our opponents are as committed as we are to the high value of human life. We may have to give in on some points as a matter of power politics, but we should not do so because we assume that in the end all our countrymen are equally "pro-life."

RICHARD STITH

Sacramento, Calif.

To the Editors: On the volcanic subject of the abortion issue what I want to know is: where are the women? I don't mean the nuts running around carrying pictures of buckets of aborted fetuses. I mean where are the women in the halls of decision? All I hear or read about abortion seems to issue from men. (The May 31 issue of *Commonweal* is a perfect example.) This is a matter of concern to women, too. Shouldn't they be considered? Those four old overstuffed, over-fed, over-indulged Cardinals have no business rattling around Washington and speaking for the women of this country. We didn't send them there. They certainly weren't speaking for me. They haven't bothered to ask us how we feel about this matter. Not one of those pious gents have ever had to grapple with the problem of trying to figure out how to feed another mouth. And as we all know too painfully well, that old saw about "the Lord will provide" is just so much that. And I didn't notice any purple hats bobbing about on the Potomac during the Vietnam disaster. Why the sanctuary of silence on the issue of that killing? Is it less murderous to kill the fully grown, fully developed human being?

Don't misunderstand me, please. I'm not favoring abortion on demand but I think there are circumstances where abortion should be permitted: where the mother's life is endangered, or in the case of rape or incest, or other special cases. But I do think the episcopal muscle could be put to better use on the issues of poverty, racism, equal rights, etc., and some other vital issues gnawing at the gut of our country. . . .

MARY KENNEDY

Bloomington, Ill.

To the Editors: In large measure the developing polarity over abortion can be traced to the inability of the average Catholic to explain "their" view on human life. This crucially important issue has never been given a forum for debate and dialogue within the administrative church. Consequently, Catholics are just not equipped to discuss the issues. As a result, they can do no more than manifest basic emotions.

We, in the National Association of Laity, have spent over four years attemping to formulate a basic position. Beyond any question this is the most complex issue we have ever undertaken. We have agreed—only—that an unborn person is entitled to due process of law from the moment of conception. But, assuming even this basic premise, the Congress must then consider the basic (but not absolute) rights of all involved "persons": the unborn child; mother; father; as well as the entire community. In my opinion, we in NAL, and other moderate Christians, have an obligation to assist in formulating a legislative response.

LEO J. JORDAN

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: I only wish Fr. Degnan's zest for compromise "Law, Morals and Abortion," May 31] was shared by someone on the other side. As things stand, the cards in hand surely deserve to be played out. What is foolish to the Greeks, an albatross to the Left and bad for a hundred million dollar business will simply not be mass-produced in American image factories. Because the life movement is symbolically impotent in our reflective political culture, it trades in the hard—often undervalued—currency of old-fashioned, interest-group, one-issue, grass-roots politics. Why not wait and see how much that money can buy?

Granted, eventual descent from the high ground of magisterial morality into positive law is necessary, even "a duty." But I suggest there are assumptions upon which it ought to proceed. Without these there might be no change at all in the present law because the life movement would not be able to muster sufficient strength for proposals which promise trivial results based on capitulation of principle.

First, compromise is no more than a necessary evil or temporary expedient—like a Civil Rights Act which applied to only quadroons, or a government policy which suffered Vietnamese non-combatants to be napalmed just twice a week. Likewise, the social order and responsible personalities and ideologies have demonstrated a radical defect which render them permanently suspect.

Second, a significant reduction in the body count. Here Fr. Degnan's suggestions offer little reassurance. About 90% of all abortions are presently performed in the first trimester. True, most of these are in the third month. But if abortion-on-demand is limited to the first two months, we have no reason to

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believe that habits, gadgetry and potions cannot be refined to compensate for the inconvenience. And not only are the same methods used throughout the first trimester, but difficulties (medical and legal) in establishing true duration of pregnancy, slippery doctors, desperate women, ACLU lawyers and the probability that abortion will soon be by injection or pill—which, if employed at any stage, will be employed throughout—combine to render such a restriction unenforceable. Now with the specific exceptions which Fr. Degnan provides (rape, incest, deformity, mother's disposition, etc.) and which already account for most second and third trimester abortions, we have a situation not remarkably different from what we have. In fact, either broad exceptions or an unenforced two-month limit alone would probably change little. Of increasing concern, no resistance is offered to the designs of genetic engineers on clons, chimeras and the Indefectible Man. The concept of the two-month limit is obnoxious to most who would labor to change the law since our opposition is based precisely on the premise that such distinctions are arbitrary, not merely that the nation ought to be spared ghastly photos and hospital horror stories. Perhaps a list of narrowly defined exceptions is the best solution.

Third, discouragement through public law and social legislation what cannot be prevented through criminal law and punitive legislation. It is true, as Fr. Degnan quotes Aquinas, that "it does not belong to human law to repress all vices" (though St. Thomas does state that "murder, theft and suchlike" are not under discussion). Nevertheless, "the purpose of human law is to lead men to virtue" and, one assumes, away from vice. So legislation which inhibits the moral and financial support of the State for abortion and the organizations and ideologies which exacerbate its practice is in order. Likewise, positive steps to diminish its rationale. The notable successes of the life movement are here: witness the restrictions on foreign aid, welfare, legal services, experimentation.

Perhaps because of the frustration of direct remedy, I hopefully perceive the lineament of a more comprehensive and consistent politics emerging from the pro-life thing that aims to protect and nurture the family and its authentic values. They are the origin and guardians of the social compact which Dr. Ramsey so lucidly describes, without which even human love and procreation run with violence and death.

RENA MARZEN

Huntington Beach, Calif.

To the Editors: In your editorial "Catholics and Abortion" [May 31] you state that we should all work to prevent "abortion from becoming little more than simply another form of birth control." Surely you've missed the point: abortion *is* a form of birth control, and while contraception can more easily be rationalized, the ultimate aim of both is to prevent the birth (for whatever reason) of an unwanted child. The secular humanist never misses the point which is why he can so consistently defend both abortion and contraception on the same basis. His whole position revolves around one central point: man is *free* (and if you can understand what that word means in context you will understand why 'dialogue' is futile) to manipulate his sexuality in any way he chooses. There is no real chance for compromise between the two positions because there is no common ground of value. It is not so much that the secular humanist can't be convinced as that he won't be convinced. I can be accused of over-simplifying. Assuredly it is more comfortable when one is aspiring to be a member of an intellectual elite to talk of non-essentials: admittedly there are pregnancies from rape or from incest, but how many (or how few?) really? And is that really what is at stake?

HARVEY SHE'ENY

Bronx, N.Y.

To the Editors: Father Daniel Degnan's attempt to broaden the base of the anti-abortion forces in a way respectful both of essential pro-life values and the requirements of a pluralistic democratic society is thoughtful and sensitive. I read Father Degnan's article with admiration and sadness. Admiration for the skillful attempt to balance many values; sadness because the argument will lack a constituency. Degnan argues for "moderately restrictive abortion laws" and a constitutional amendment returning to the states the power to prohibit abortions. But if the states generally support abortion, then will we accept this decision? If we do, then it appears that we allow moral questions to be decided by law; if we don't, then it appears that the democratic process is accepted only when it decides the way we want it to. Despite this stalemate, perhaps this route should be tried anyway, but it seems doomed to defeat —by definition moderately restrictive abortion laws significantly relativize fetal life and many who sincerely value fetal life will find a proposed law which replaces the present six months unrestricted abortions with an earlier limit of, say, two months, either perplexing or unconvincing. The time for successful moderation on this issue might have passed. If earlier in the controversy the hierarchy had been open to such an approach there might have been some hope. But maybe this is asking for too much wisdom. Perhaps complex judgments like Degnan's come only with hindsight. My suspicion is that those of us who are horrified by the deeper significance of casual abortion will live in both quiet and vocal dissent, but without much hope of substantially changing the present situation. My hope is that we will realize that casual abortion is but a symptom of America's larger problem, an abysmal lack of concern with almost any group unrelated to personal mobility or economic efficiency—the aged, the unemployed, the underemployed, the poor of all races. Perhaps we will be reminded by the abortion laws of the need for a larger dissent from the structured inhumanity of much of modern society. Christianity must become unpopular again. For Catholics especially, perhaps, the abortion laws will remind us of our vocation to be restless pilgrims.

JAMES R. KELLY

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THE SCREEN

Despite the abundant political activity in her films, Lina Wertmuller seems to have little regard for politics. In fact, she seems to dislike it altogether. In *Love and Anarchy*, for instance, neither of the two main characters has any political consciousness even though both are zealous Anarchists. The film deals with a young provincial, Tunin (Giancarlo Giannini), who comes to Rome to assassinate Mussolini. But we realize the moment we set eyes on him—with his baggy pant legs and shuffling clodhoppers he looks like an escapee from an R. Crumb cartoon—that Tunin is too much of a booby to understand ideology. His contact in Rome, a prostitute named Salome (Mariangela Melato), is a bit more worldly-wise, but hardly brighter. Her fanaticism, like his, comes of a purely personal desire for revenge.

History aside, we have the feeling from the very beginning that neither of them is going to come within a country mile of committing the assassination they intend. When he goes on an outing to case the scene of the attempt, a piazza where Il Duce is to speak in a few days, Tunin seems so hopelessly out of place there. We feel that his presence, so obvious now when the square is deserted, would hardly be less obvious if it were thronged with people. It is so modern, spare and imposing a place, while he is so disheveled, lumbering and oafish a man. It's possible to read into the look on his face something wild-eyed and dangerous, but it seems more natural to conclude that his eyes simply don't focus on the same spot—that he is incapable of either focusing his mind well enough to do anything historically significant or focusing his eyes sharply enough to hit what he's aiming at.

If Tunin in *Love and Anarchy* is too much of a bumpkin for us to take his politics seriously, Mimi in *The Seduction of Mimi*, the other Wertmuller film in current release in this country, is too much of a Lothario. That Mimi is played by the same actor as Tunin only seems to enhance the ways in which the two men differ. Where Tunin never even combs his hair, Mimi is all pomade and hair nets. Where Tunin is clean-shaven and freckled, Mimi is dark-browed and mustachioed. Where Tunin is without self-image, an unthinking stone plopped immovably in the stream of history, Mimi is a striker of attitudes, an upwardly mobile salmon leaping against the current of the times.

Having become a Communist out of impulse more than conviction, Mimi must leave his native village to get work in the North, and there he meets Fiore (again, Mariangela Melato), a sidewalk vendor of Marxist literature and hand-made knitwear. At the moment Mimi happens to be making her acquaintance, her stand is attacked by right-wing thugs, so Mimi takes most of the lumps. As a result she gives him a tumble too, but a marriage made in the Revolution this isn't. For one thing, Mimi already has a wife back home. And for another, the first time he gets Fiore alone he practically molests her. She repels the advance, but more out of conventional, Christian concern for her virtue than comradely indignation. Fiore's politics resemble less the ideas in the books she sells than the crazy, abstract patterns she knits into her sweaters. She makes ideology into something homely and comfortable to wear like her sweaters, and both turn out to fit Mimi perfectly.

Of course whether you see any political import in Wertmuller's films all depends on how the term "politics" is defined. You can't help wondering whether she isn't, like so many imaginative, self-assertive women these days, in the process of redefining it. When Mimi attacks Fiore sexually, his actions seem to parallel those of the rightwingers who attacked her a few scenes earlier on ideological grounds. We feel at least implicitly that she is involved in a more political struggle than she realizes —the old battle of the sexes transformed into a war of liberation. If the love life of these characters is being politicized, however, it's not something that Wertmuller approves, nor is it a result of the way the women in the film perceive life, Wertmuller herself included.

The only one who could be said to turn love into politics is Mimi. In a sense love has always been the most important political issue for Italian men, and though Mimi's progressivism may be flimsy, in the traditional political area of love he is a real hard-liner. This side of his nature is revealed when his long neglected wife becomes pregnant—by another man! It ought to be the perfect excuse for the weak-willed Mimi to let his marriage lapse so he can devote himself full-time to Fiore and his own bastard child. They are, after all, the only people he really cares for, and his wife would hardly miss him. But instead he becomes so obsessed with revenging his honor that he spends all his time trying to seduce the wife of the man who made love to his wife. The result is that he ruins not only his own slim chance for happiness, but Fiore's as well.

In *Love and Anarchy* also, politics triumphs over love. On the morning Tunin is to get his shot at Mussolini, Salome and another prostitute conspire to let him oversleep because they both love him. But when he awakes, Tunin just shoots the nearest policeman instead. Since this crime is a completely inadequate substitute for shooting Mussolini, its only effect is to show the two women how little satisfaction he can take from love alone. Thus Tunin turns out to be, like Mimi, political in an incorrigible sort of way, and Mrs. Wertmuller's only politics turn out to be a sort of anti-politics.

Women have always been thought to have some inher-

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ent incapacity for the purely abstract kinds of love and hate that politics requires. Women used to be rather proud of this, in fact. But they have become self-conscious about it lately because womanhood itself has been politicized. Among radical lesbians an ability to form only personal attachments is now held in such contempt that *even* personal attachments are supposed to be formed out of strictly ideological and impersonal motives. That is a form of emotional suicide, and if it is what's necessary to be a real feminist, then clearly Lina Wertmuller isn't one. Political lesbianism is behavior in a class with the revenge Mimi exacts for the betrayal of his honor. What distinguishes the heroines in Wertmuller's films is that they retain a womanish incapacity for abstract love or hate. That is what makes them so superior to the foolish men whom they have the misfortune to love.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

SOLZHENITSYN'S LONG CRY OF RAGE

SAUL MALOFF

Everybody loves Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn. The President and Vice President love him, and the Secretary of State and the Senate Minority Leader love him too: the list is long and illustrious. Their love is exclusive—monogamous, so to speak; fiercely jealous, possessive, *nuclear*. They have room in their capacious hearts for one big writer at a time. As literary critics they are austere, hierarchic, and accordingly will not countenance all those obscure little writers who, if they are still alive, languish in limbo or exile or in the jails or psychiatric wards of South Vietnam, Greece, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Spain, the Soviet Union: this list too is long and infamous. When Allende's Chile fell to a fascist putsch, no great alarm was sounded for Pablo Neruda: neither the President nor his Secretary of State offered him asylum, honorary citizenship; and the poet, a man of exquisite sensibility, died quietly before he could become a celebrated cause. Along the banks of the Potomac, it may be, they prefer prose to verse.

The occasion, as all the world knows, was a concatenation of events which abruptly ended Solzhenitsyn's life as a Soviet citizen: the seizure of the samizdat manuscript of *The Gulag Archipelago*,* his decision thereupon to publish the Russian-language edition in Paris, the violent denunciation and vilification, the knock on the door, the menace to himself, his family, friends and supporters—and then his expulsion from the country. Famous while still a rumor, the original publication was accompanied by an immense publicity campaign in the Western media, including extensive excerpts of those portions which were likely to receive the widest attention; and its appearance in English seemed when it occurred (concurrently with a strike by Harper & Row employes calling for a boycott of the book) almost anticlimactic. Those whose interest in it is casual will content themselves, one hazards to say, with glimpses, snippets, summaries by way of media reports; otherwise it will be widely bought and little read, for many reasons, including its formidable bulk and paraphernalia of notes and glossaries, names and allusions, historical and political, that are likely to mystify and finally dishearten.

Except on the ideological right, where the book will be read for obvious and uninteresting reasons; and on the left, especially the remnants of the "old" left, for more complex and humanly interesting ones.

By this I have in mind what may be called the problem of belief; or, to put it no less clumsily, what can one committed to socialism "believe" of a society which is socialist in name and (in some sense) fact? And—the most difficult question by far—what are the relations of belief and actuality?

Historically, prior to the gradual erosion and collapse of belief, belief was total, passionate; and, correspondingly, so was disbelief: no concession or doubt was possible. In order to support absolute belief, and reenforce absolute denial of the most purblind kind, an awesome mechanism of repression, amounting to an annihilation of the little messages reality keeps sending us to announce its presence, was necessary: myths and fictions about man and society, and history.

The heroic myth, in its nursery version (and only the purity, innocence and irreality of that version could subserve the purpose), went something like this. When, following the convulsions of the October Revolution—by all odds the pivotal event in modern history, in fact the line of demarcation between "pre-history" and History—the dictatorship of the proletariat was entrenched in power, the class struggle, far from ending in triumphant resolution, entered a still more acute stage, as the enemy, internal and external, only momentarily put to rout, reassembled itself and joined forces to demolish it. In a hostile world, "war communism" was a permanent

*The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation. Vols. I-II. By Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn. Translated from the Russian by Thomas P. Whitney. (Harper & Row, 660 pp. $12.50)

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condition. The actual Civil War, though the foreign imperialists were expelled and the White armies defeated, was transformed into a permanent civil war. Given these premises hardened by events into the very forms of reality, selectively chosen and rigidly interpreted, the implausible and improbable were mere further supporting evidence of the diabolic wiliness of the international bourgeoisie and its agents within, and a gigantic, cunning apparatus of propaganda. The profound roots of belief were founded in a redemptive vision of the Soviet Union as the harbinger of the splendid city itself—nothing less than that and as consuming as a God-intoxicated mystic's vision of the Holy City.

Those little messages from the corrupt world outside were sordid lies, beneath contempt; or, when they grew too clamorous to be dismissed out of hand, suspectible of simple explanation. Kronstadt? The collectivization of the land—or, put another way, the liquidation of the Kulaks? The liquidation of the opposition—the Social Revolutionaries, the Trotskyites, the anarchists? The Kirov assassination and subsequent mass arrests? The trials and purge of the Old Bolsheviks—of Lenin's closest associates—and the subsequest mass arrests? The Pact? Finland? The disastrous early phases of the War? The silencing or disappearance throughout the Thirties of the artists and intellectuals? The omnipresence and seeming omnipotence of the political police? Nothing confounded explanation. Once the postulate was granted, all means to the great good end followed, the turbulence of the indefinite present, which was in any case a "transitional period" dialectically inevitable, was a necessary guarantor of the fulfillment of History's gathering intentions. If a true believer could only believe that Bukharin (to choose one of the countless examples) was an agent of the French or Germans or Japanese or Finns or Monacans (the prosecutors themselves must have lost track), then what finally *was* unbelievable? Didn't Bukharin himself, of his own free will, confess it? Didn't Vishinsky demonstrate it beyond reasonable doubt? Only a "social fascist" would deny it. (That once-popular, now-forgotten term is due any minute for revival.)

Until all at once belief crumbled. Actually it was not so dramatic a conversion as that; over the years the worms of doubt had done their work. For some, the Past; for others the Doctors' Plot, or Khrushchev's address to the 20th Party Congress, or Hungary, or Prague. Those still impervious are beyond discourse. Now Nixon is feted in the Kremlin, a stone's throw from the Lubyanka, to the roar of the masses. Brezhnev sports a golf-cart, a Cadillac, a Lincoln Continental, bearhugs Chuck Connor. Pepsi flows in the streets of Odessa and Kiev. Occidental Petroleum has just signed a twenty-billion-dollar contract in Moscow. It is called détente.

What is most harrowing about Solzhenitsyn's long cry of rage and sorrow is not the excruciatingly detailed map of hell—the "Gulag Archipelago" which is his metaphor for the immense network of detention centers and prison camps scattered throughout the country, a nation within a nation; nor the unimaginable masses of victims stretching across the necropolis of Soviet history: individuals, classes and categories of individuals, entire national and ethnic populations—how many millions can only be estimated.

No—none of this; what is truly unbearable is that for the most part, and in all essentials, he tells us nothing we did not already know, and virtually from the beginning, all the while that theoretic reader of the old left—who was in many ways a good man, better than most of us—was either denying the manifest truth (though repressing is the more accurate term) or devising callow though not unimpressive arguments to the effects that the truth was a tissue of lies ("slanders" or better still "vicious slanders" was, and remains, the preferred usage in *Pravda* and *Izvestia*) or that, dialectically speaking, the events in question were historically necessary to the survival and prospects of socialism. In fact, Akhmatova's poems are "decadent" and Tsvetoyeva's suicide proves it. Mandelstam's Acmeist verses were "formalist," "cosmopolitan," abstractionism a degenerate art-form—and since the Jews had their own Soviet Socialist Republic, even if they didn't appear to want it, Zionism was nothing other than petit-bourgeois chauvinism; and the Ukrainians, Georgians, Uzbeks, Turkistans, Armenians and so on were no better than the gypsies and Baptists in their old-regime intransigence. Besides, Babel fell silent ("Comrades," he said, "I practice a new aesthetic—the aesthetic of silence") because he never was a writer in the first place. Even the Writers' Union knew that; not to mention the Committee on Culture of the Second Stakhanov Tractor Collective in the Third District of the Nether Urals, which had exceeded its quotas for eight straight years of eschewing sloth on Sunday.

At any time prior to Khrushchev's disclosures, and even for some time after when the full implications finally registered and what was not and could not be disclosed was at least surmised, Solzhenitsyn's history and polemic would have seemed yet another defector's or internal émigré's wildly exaggerated anti-Soviet diatribe, probably subsidized by the CIA (through one of its covers, *Encounter* perhaps), or ghosted by Robert Conquest. Now, even Solzhenitsyn's immense moral authority is not necessary to persuade us. We know; we've always known; we knew before any of the irrefutable data was assembled.

Still, obsessed by the looming presence Stalin—pacified by the infinitely consoling myth of personal aberration, of rampant paranoia, of such euphemisms as "mistakes" and the "cult of personality"—the old left never fully assessed the depth of scope of the deep, pervasive, structural, systematic corruption and complicity. And therein lies the transcendent value of Solzhenitsyn's autopsy—in his inescapable reminder that the interrogators, thugs, assassins of the GPU-NKVD-KGB-MVD (the names change but never the function or methods) were after all recruits from

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the Soviet people, nowhere else—though satellite colonies provided contingents as well; and they were the same Soviet masses who made the Revolution in the name of the radiant new dawn and then walked away from it—just that, relinquished power, abandoned the "cadres" of the Revolution, and went back to sleep; which is to say, to cultivating their gardens; to punching the clock and paying the rent. And providing the police informers.

There was no way they could not have known! And if this is true of the "good Germans," it is as true—it is truer—of the "good Russians," who had just made the Revolution, created a society unprecedented in history and fraught with possibilities that caused the mind and heart to race. They were a new race, uncontaminated by the pollutions of history. When the terror began, the vibrations of the heroic period still in the air, these very same men and women pointed the finger, locked the door, closed the shutters, put out the light, and prayed for rain. The next day the flat across the courtyard was empty, the house down the street had been ransacked, the man at the next workbench was unaccountably absent, day after day after day. No one asked after him. Millions upon millions of victims: hardly a family was unaffected, if not directly, then close at hand, within sight and sound. There was no way the men and women who had made the Revolution in the name of a gorgeous vision of the splendid city could not have known that the dream had become a nightmare; that socialism had been subverted; that counterrevolutionaries, acting of course in the name of the Revolution, had been installed in absolute power.

Dubcek and Allende spoke of "socialism with a human face." Without a human face, one may be permitted to say, there can be no socialism worth the name. Perhaps, more than a half-century after the Revolution, it is permissible to apply a simple-minded measure and say that if there were, writers and intellectuals, dancers and musicians, artists and poets would not defect, flee, emigrate from it, even if by doing so they knowingly place their creative lives in extreme jeopardy; nor would the best of them feel compelled to speak to power, not prophetically in the name of socialism, but quixotically, absurdly, in utter desperation and surely without hope, as Solzhenitsyn does in his *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*, and as in the case of Andrei Sakharov (or Daniel, Sinyavsky, Amalrik, Bukovsy, Chukovskaya, Litvinov, Medvedev, Ginzburg . . . the list is long and will grow longer), by invoking the most ordinary principles of liberal humanism. Which is to say, conscience no longer seeks to recall the betrayed revolution by an appeal to first principles, but instead speaks the antiquated language of bourgeois democracy, which in that context takes on a revolutionary resonance and at the same time measures the depth of an historical tragedy.

BOOKS

SOLZHENITSYN'S CRY TO THE SOVIET LEADERS

RICHARD M. MILLS, JUDITH M. MILLS

Letter to the Soviet Leaders

ALEKSANDR I. SOLZHENITSYN

Tr. by Thomas P. Whitney

Harper & Row, $3.50

Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Letter* is the first dissident publication to have caused concern and even alarm in the Western media in almost twenty years. Why?

Dissidence entails two distinct factors, a critique of existing reality and proposals for improving it. The dissidents' criticisms of Soviet reality were easy for Westerners to accept when they coincided with those made in the West. And the proposals were tolerable so long as they involved heightening the role of the Soviet middle class as did the suggestions of historian Andrei Amalrik, or Maj. General Grigorenko's idea of humanizing Marxism, or the physicist Andrei Sakharov's enlightened discussion of human progress.

Rarely was it noted that the ideas of some dissidents tended toward nationalism or Slavophilism, a striving to return to the past in the belief that Russia's path of development necessarily should differ from Europe's. The implications of these anachronistic ways of perceiving things became clear when the *Letter* appeared.

In it Solzhenitsyn has advanced a stern warning to the Soviet leaders that the USSR is on the brink of a political and ecological crisis which has at its root the adherence to a no longer constructive ideology. Conflicting interpretations of Marxism may precipitate war between China and the Soviet Union. The U.S.S.R. supports industrialization and militarization in the Third World as part of its Marxist program. In each case the Soviet Union neglects her domestic needs in the interests of an international mission.

On the home front Marxism has left the nation in no better a position. There are internal management problems. The push to industrialize has placed undue emphasis on economic progress to the detriment of the environment. Foreign nations have come in to carry off invaluable natural resources. Wages are not

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sufficient to support families. Women are forced to work and the family structure suffers. Forced collectivization and bureaucratization have led to general demoralization, but the government, guided by Marxist dictates and selfish concerns, takes no notice.

And, most detrimental to the moral well-being of the people, Marxism is militantly atheistic. It persecutes Russian Orthodoxy which Solzhenitsyn sees as essential to national unity and strength. Although the Soviet Union is now in ascendancy, its strength does not rest on the best or strongest of foundations.

The solution is to abandon the Western ideology of Marxism and substitute nationalism and patriotism. Solzhenitsyn notes Stalin's success during World War II when he effectively substituted Orthodoxy and patriotism for Marxism.

Now is the time to overcome both Tsarist and Marxist Russia's common failing—the readiness to engage in international missions—and to concentrate on Russia's internal development. Russia must release from her control the satellite nations and the non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union. The remaining regions, roughly coterminous with the Russian Soviet Federated Republic (the RSFSR), the largest of the fifteen republics comprising the Soviet Union, ought to be developed rationally, according to sound ecological and "national" principles. This can best be done under the aegis of a benevolent authoritarianism deriving its moral basis from Orthodoxy.

Some of these ideas should come as no surprise to Western readers. They have been present in Solzhenitsyn's writings, although not in so systematic a form. His discontent with the Stalinist period is well evidenced in his literary works. But only partially noticed, or even sometimes totally ignored, were the adumbrations of a positive program that emerges in the *Letter*.

Solzhenitsyn, very much like Tolstoy, seems to have been using his literary works to try to sort out elements of solutions to the moral problems he sees facing his nation.

One way out was proposed in *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. The Baptist Alyoshka explains to Ivan that suffering is a Christian good and that prison can be salutary: it provides the opportunity to concentrate on the soul. The theme is further developed in *First Circle:* only a "zek" (prisoner) has an immortal soul; free people are often denied one because of the vain life they lead. The main character, Nerzhin, reaches his fullest potential in prison and, in effect, choses a longer jail term in the interests of his spiritual development. He consciously chooses a path of isolation and deprivation.

Spiritual growth does not, however, mean that the possibility for resuming normal life is retained. In *Cancer Ward*'s extended metaphor, Kostoglotov combats the cancer of Stalinism, undergoes a cure (the hospital equals prison camp) and survives. However, as a result of the medical treatment, he is left impotent. The "cure" forced upon him as the only means to survival has left him unfit for normal living. Similarly, Nerzhin's wife wonders if they will ever again resume their life together: prison has crippled him; he has turned to "idealism" and "mysticism."

This argumentation could leave Solzhenitsyn at an impasse. Is Russia herself left incapacitated because she has been forced to endure Stalinism? An answer to the dilemma lies in other of his characters who managed to survive the period without losing their zest for life. These Solzhenitsyn drew unmistakably in the Slavophil-Populist tradition. Ivan Denisovich is never really convinced by Alyoshka and manages to make a "good day" by virtue of his natural wit and craftiness. Spiridon, the peasant in *First Circle* has a vigor and resiliency which permits him to adapt continually without ever betraying his sense of self. Each of these men has a strong sense of family and firm ties to the soil.

Solzhenitsyn has, in effect, "gone to the people" for his answer and this is at the very heart of his concept of nationality. It is a nationalism based not on political structures but on a belief in a culture and a people. Like the nineteenth century Slavophils he is looking to a culture that predates all formal political organization and which is perpetuated by the popular (peasant) masses. It is this sense of a culture and a nation-people that permits Kostoglotov to love Russia despite his plight and which prompts the other cancer patients to look longingly to Russia's mushrooms and Russia itself for a miracle cure. It permits Solzhenitsyn to love Russia despite Marxism.

The "people" were considered by those of Slavophil leanings to be Russia's most valuable natural resource, endowed with great stamina and spiritual strength and an instinctive sense of justice and morality. Spiridon embodies the very essence of this direct moral intuition when he solves the problem of Stalin's morality, over which the more intellectual but less spiritual agonize. He does so in a simple statement approaching a folk proverb: the wolfhound is right and the cannibal is wrong.

In the *Letter* Solzhenitsyn asks that the people be permitted to develop in their own way in the Russian Northeast. He feels that with only a modicum of direction the process will be ecologically sound (cf. Matryona in "Matryona's House" who would not poison roaches lest the cat be killed and accepts even these as fellow participants in life). The Russians, he says, have suffered enough. It is time to test their moral strength in a more constructive setting. He has abandoned suffering as an end in itself. It may help to form character but need not be a permanent condition. Alyoshka and Nerzhin give way to Ivan Denisovich and Spiridon.

Love of nation and respect for its people is a constant theme in Solzenitsyn's literary work, if underplayed, and it paved the way for the full-blown nationalism of *August 1914*. It is also pivotal to other aspects of his solution in the *Letter*.

That Solzhenitsyn responded warmly to certain features of the early post-revolutionary period is apparent in his positive portrayal of Radovich in *First Circle* who protests Stalinist perversions and asks for Leninist purity, as well as in Nerzhin's enchantment with Spiri-

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don's stories about the NEP period when the peasantry was left free to develop itself. He salvages from these early years the soviets (councils) which were significant to decision-making then as part of his authoritarian rule. The soviets are reminiscent of the supposedly communal societal organization of pre-history so idealized by the Slavophils. In a Slavophil context the soviets can be seen as a modern manifestation of a natural popular system of organization among the Eastern Slavs.

In his literary works Solzhenitsyn long searched for a moral outlook for life and political organization and unbeknownst to himself he really had found it. In an essay on Solzhenitsyn which appeared in Paris in 1970 Fr. Alexander Schmemann, Dean of St. Vladimir's (Orthodox) Theological School, recognized both the national and Christian character of Solzhenitsyn's work. He calls Solzhenitsyn the first national writer of the Soviet period. This—because he has freely accepted spiritual responsibility for his people. He also marvels at the Christian nature of the literary works. He describes it as an intuitive, even unconscious perception of the world and man that grows out of Biblical and Christian inspiration. Solzhenitsyn thanked Schemann for explaining himself to himself.

He claims that Schemann gave him a fuller perspective on himself and his understanding of his world. He was told that he had an "intuitive" sense of Christianity very much like the Russian folk in whom the Slavophils found similar intuitions. Solzhenitsyn rejects the West, its Marxism, its democracy, its Christianity (which the Slavophils saw as inevitably leading to secularism), its technology and turns inward to popular traditions, both political and ecclesiastical. How could he resist taking the Russian national church, so identified with the Russian people, as the moral basis of his authoritarian political system?

For Russians democracy is not a viable alternative. For one thing, their experience with democracy was limited to an eight-month period in 1917—and even that version was a caricature of democracy. Additionally, the Western models of democracy are not attractive because of the many shortcomings Solzhenitsyn sees in them. Their cultural basis, formed during the Renaissance and flowering during the Enlightenment, is experiencing a crisis. Also offensive are the excesses of "democracy run riot" in the form of noisy election campaigns and court decisions which undermine the prerogatives of governments. He cites the Ellsberg case as an example of the latter in which he manages both to misunderstand the workings of the jury system and not to appreciate the totality of the issues involved.

While wishing to avoid the excesses of democracy he equally shuns tyranny and arbitrariness. Apparently, Solzhenitsyn sees himself as having found a middle way, and that he calls authoritarianism, several types of which the Russians have been accustomed to through the centuries.

The great obstacle to understanding Solzhenitsyn is that he only partially clarifies the meanings of his political terminology, often doing so by saying what they are not as in the case of democracy. In the *Letter* he has no positive concept of democracy, but he does have one of authoritarianism, but it is an ideal typology of authoritarianism which does not necessarily correspond to all forms of Tsarist authoritarianism which the Russians experienced.

Again taking the middle ground, Solzhenitsyn maintains that freedom does not mean complacency and licentiousness, and order does not mean arbitrariness and tyranny. As he understands it, authoritarianism involves a government of laws, not men. He attacks the existing Soviet political system for its arbitrariness in failing to observe the very laws which it has itself put on the books. Because in the Soviet Union the powers that be are self-appointed something very necessary to real authoritarian government is missing: there are no independent centers of legislative, executive and judicial power and at every level of governance those powers are completely at the mercy of a telephone call from the self-appointed powers that be. To be sure, at each level of Soviet governance there is one person whose word is law, and that is an indication of how widespread arbitrariness is. But that person's word remains arbitrary law only until that phone call from above comes in communicating to him the higher arbitrary law.

None of this is authoritarianism, says Solzhenitsyn, but its perversion. In an authoritarian order laws would reflect the values and will of the population, the laws would be observed by the rulers, and independent centers of authority, particularly at the local level, would exist. The reinvigorated soviets (councils) would be particularly important in this context.

What can one make of Solzhenitsyn's political ideas? How one reacts to the *Letter* very much depends upon who one is. The mainland Chinese, for example, might berate Solzhenitsyn for not realizing that the Soviet leaders have already given up Marxism. Conservatively inclined American readers might find the concept of authoritarianism somewhat akin to their idea of "law and order," while liberals will not particularly appreciate the pessimism and the acerbic comments on Renaissance, Enlightenment and on what Prof. Adam Ulam has chidingly called in another context

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the raucousness of democracy. Other readers will find oversimplifications, reductionism: Is it simply Marxism which is driving the U.S.S.R. into increasing involvement in the Middle East and South Asia—or is it superpower politics, or some mixture of both?

More interesting are what the reactions of the addressees of the *Letter* might be, the Soviet leaders. At several junctures in its Solzhenitsyn remarks that he is appealing to the leaders' sense of realism since they are hardheaded politicians. It is unlikely that the leaders would entertain the thought of abandoning the ideology which may push them toward overcommitment on a world scale but at the same time legitimizes their rule. Rather than abandon the ideology, some form of reinterpretation would be the likely way for politicians to eliminate the problem of overcommitment.

Even more problematical are the suggestions of retrenchment in sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and physical dismemberment of the U.S.S.R. Here, one could expect no give from the leaders, and they would be joined in their intractability by a large number of Russian nationalists (at home and abroad) who, quite unlike Solzhenitsyn's nationalism of ethnic retrenchment, are partisans of empire.

On the other hand, Solzhenitsyn and the leaders agree that the Northeast and Siberia must be developed, but they differ as to how. It must be by coincidence that in March of this year Brezhnev announced a program to develop agriculture in the R.S.F.S.R. at a cost of 35 billion rubles in the next five years with even greater expenditures in the future. What is questionable is Solzhenitsyn's belief that the Northeast can be developed by a truncated Russia alone, without foreign help, and by a village structure with the low-level technology he envisages as necessary to avoid ecological problems. The metaphor of having one's cake and eating it too is much to the point here.

The *Letter* can be considered as a contribution to the dissident critique of Soviet politics. Because so many a can of worms is opened up in the *Letter* the dissident movement cannot ever be the same again. The major dissident writers have heretofore been understandably guarded and circumspect in their criticisms and suggestions. By and large they have called for relatively incremental modifications in the current system. The *Letter* has raised some fundamental and sensitive questions, discussion of which evokes strong emotions and disagreements among both Russians and the other nationalities in the Soviet Union.

Solzhenitsyn has asked a very old question in the history of political thought—what is the best form of government? His answer is that no one form is best *in practice* because governments must grow out of the character-people being governed. This very conservative stance carries him to a condemnation of revolutions as disastrous. Yet he provides no means by which his own radical ideas for transforming his nation might be achieved.

Like the other dissidents, but in his own way, Solzhenitsyn has answered the question what is to be done? but has avoided posing the harder question of *how* it is to be done. In publishing his *Letter* he has staked out a unique place not only among the dissidents but also among the numerous critics of the modern, technologically- and progress-oriented world. His position is unique because very few people will be able entirely either to associate themselves with or disassociate themselves from his ideas and programs. He is apt to remain in the West what he was in the Soviet Union—pretty much a loner, very much a gadfly.

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REVIEWERS

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All the President's Men

CARL BERNSTEIN AND BOB WOODWARD

Simon and Schuster, $8.95

J. ANTHONY LUKAS

How quickly we have forgotten that numbing season, that soporific summer and fall of 1972 when we all fell asleep. As we lurch toward the ultimate constitutional confrontation, it is easy to air brush from memory those languid days when CHEEP feinted us out of our shoes, when the White House wove a nearly seamless cover story, when eminent Washington correspondents dutifully reported the President's "historic voyages for peace" to Moscow and Peking, when the voters shrugged off Watergate and fastened instead on abortion, amnesty, marijuana and Tom Eagleton, when—finally—Richard Nixon won a stunning mandate for four more years.

It was, in short, a time when "the system" plainly did not work: Congress did not check or balance, prosecutors did not follow the evidence wherever it might lead, editors and reporters did not pursue the most important story of our time.

Ultimately, to be sure, the system did grind into action. Senators like Sam Ervin and Daniel Inouye; prosecutors like Archibald Cox and Leon Jaworski; reporters like Sy Hersch and John Crewdson of the *New York Times;* Jack Nelson, Ron Ostrow and Bob Jackson of the *Los Angeles Times;* Sandy Smith of *Time;* Nicholas Horrock of *Newsweek* began to play out their appointed roles.

But through that limp summer and fall of 1972, two men rang doorbells in the middle of the night, pored over financial records, wore their index fingers raw with phone calls to a lengthening list of reluctant sources, and almost doublehandedly kept the elusive story alive.

This book is the story of how Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein—now known widely as "Woodstein"—unraveled that story from the first fragmen-

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tary clues in a burglar's address book to the bombshell bursts of the following spring.

It is a spare, almost ascetic yarn, told in the third person, eschewing histrionics, even most analysis. This restraint was undoubtedly wise. For Watergate is such a rich, effulgent story, so full of baroque twists and macabre delights, that it needs no literary embroidery. Moreover, Woodstein were not trying to write a history of Watergate. They were telling the story of a story, the kind of yarn that reporters tell each other in their favorite tavern after the day is done, and they wisely kept that kind of texture to the tale. For a reporter, the tale has the smell of authenticity on every page.

In this sense, the book is a welcome antidote to some of the grossest misconceptions spread by Spiro Agnew, Pat Buchanan, Ron Ziegler, and others who have sought to make the performance of the press the chief issue. Conscientious reporters do not print raw, unsubstantiated charges without checking and rechecking. They do not accept "leaks" from one source without considering what motives the leaker might have had for putting out the information. Woodstein show how a story is fitted together through trial and error, countless phone calls, blind alleys, and sheer luck.

Likewise, the book demonstrates that good reporters do not set off to destroy a Presidency. Indeed, that was the furthest thing from Woodstein's mind that June Sunday when they were called in to report an intriguing burglary. And even when the trail of evidence led inexorably toward the Oval Office, they at first shrank from its implications, still victims of the Presidential mystique which had blinded so many others.

The book's best moments stem less from the reporters' triumphs than from their goofs. They suffered all the queasy qualms and anguish as the story seemed to lead them into untrackable swamps of error and ambiguity. Only a reporter who has awakened in the middle of the night in a sick dread at an unchecked quote can empathize fully with Bernstein's recollection of "the slow dance of panic" in his stomach when he realized that they had misinterpreted Sloan's words.

And there is a marvelous moment in a Justice Department corridor when Woodstein corner an F.B.I. man who had apparently misled them.

"The agent was no longer smiling. He looked panicked. What the hell are you talking about? he said. 'I'll deny everything. I'll deny everything.'

"Woodward unfolded his copy of the notes and showed them to the agent. They didn't want to get anyone in trouble, he said. They just needed to know what, if any, error they had made. And they needed to know that minute.

" 'I'm not talking to you about Haldeman or anything else," the agent said. 'I can't even be seen talking to you two bastards.' "

There is great versimilitude too in the portraits of the *Post*'s editors—Ben Bradlee, Howard Simons, and Harry Rosenfeld—as they pushed their two young reporters for scoop after scoop. Later, Bradlee told an interviewer he'd been "ready to hold both Woodward's and Bernstein's heads in a pail of water until they came up with another story. That dry spell was anguish. Anguish."

But the editors developed cold feet from time to time, cutting away at some of Woodstein's best work. On a Donald Segretti story, Bernstein protested when the next paragraph, describing Chapin as a functionary who responded to orders from Haldeman, was struck from the draft. Anger turned to anguish when the following paragraph was struck—an observation that Larry Young's description of the Newport Beach lawyer who allegedly paid Segretti " 'appears to fit Herbert W. Kalmbach, the President's personal attorney and former deputy finance chairman of the Nixon campaign.' "

Chapin had responded to orders from Haldeman on the Segretti "dirty tricks" campaign and the Newport Beach lawyer who paid Segretti was indeed Herbert Kalmbach, the President's lawyer. But then this very caution which so infuriated Woodstein at the time explains why so very little of what the *Post* printed on Watergate proved wrong. These were not reckless, politically-inspired attacks. They were the careful work of thoroughgoing professionals on both sides of the editor's desk.

But, ultimately, Woodstein succeeded so well because they were not truly part of "the system." They were not White House reporters, diplomatic correspondents, columnists in three-piece suits and three-piece minds who treated the White House with deference bordering on awe. They were police reporters covering a crime and ultimately they saw the President for what he was—the biggest crook of all.

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These Priests Stay

PAUL WILKES

Simon & Schuster, $6.95

RALPH McINERNY

Here is a book to make you weep, particularly if, like me, you happen to read it at a time when Cardinal Mindszenty and Solzhenitsyn are in the news. We are all humbled before men who have genuinely suffered, whose suffering was prolonged and seemingly without hope and whose release seems calculated to deprive their long martyrdoms of meaning. These two giants suffered for others, their tears were not for themselves, both find the ultimate meaning of what they underwent in Christ and the cross. Against that background, the self-centered lamentations of most of the participants in the vulgar display this book amounts to invite our pity but, since they so amply supply themselves with that, stir up something else. How awful that followers of Christ should be asked to suffer. How edifying these *confiteors* with their iterated *tua culpa.* What a tribute to taste that, having read the edited transcripts of their taped self-dramatizations, they allowed them to be published. If personal privacy is in danger it is clear that, as usual, the enemy is within. The result is a book to make you weep.

Paul Wilkes began with the idea of providing a balancing document to the daily news of clerical defections. Clearly the bulk of the clergy remains in place. Why not then exhibit, in their own words, the faithful majority? Why not indeed? For reasons not too clear, Wilkes chose to gather interviews from ten men, most of whom were on the verge of leaving and then held back. But surely it is a libel on the clergy to put forth these plangent priests as typical of the loyal ones. Nor does Wilkes' breezy negative quasi-autobiographical introduction help. I find it increasingly difficult to find anything of my own experience in others' memories of the Catholic Church into which I was born and in whose shelter I was raised and educated. The bad old days seems a more bogus simplification than the good old days.

Of course Wilkes is entitled to his memories and certainly he is not what is wrong with this book. Who can blame him for wanting to come up with an *interesting* book and no doubt the stable mature priests among the 85 percent who remained faithful to their calling must seem, like Tolstoy's happy families, too undramatic and uniform. More important, it is unlikely that any self-respecting adult would have unbosomed himself in the requisite manner or, having committed that indiscretion, consented to publication. To whom are these whining men speaking when they tape these gaucheries, droll stories, self-centered scenarios? Not to themselves, not to their God,, not even, I suspect, to Wilkes. I suspect that the ear they seek is the Public, that omnipotent nonentity. Surely publicity is the last temptation of our times. If so, these are the tales of fallen men.

Post-Watergate Democrats

IN REGARD TO political affairs generally, the failure of the Democrats is disturbing—if not even dangerous. . . . It would be an unfortunate error to slip from a recognition of this state of disarray to the conclusion that the Democrats have nothing different to offer. One can be sure a Democratic Administration would be committed to some sort of major social programs: housing, income maintenance, child care, education and health care, for example. . . .

Civil liberties would surely be better protected by a Democratic Administration, and Supreme Court nominations would be different. Perhaps, the relationship between the Presidency and Congress might return a little toward balance—though strong Presidents have been more a Democratic than a GOP phenomenon. In foreign policy, the Democrats would probably continue the Kissinger line toward China and Russia, be more solicitous of Europe and Japan, and shift slightly to the left in preferences about regimes in smaller nations. Whether the Democrats would actually effect anything significant in assistance for developing nations or in reduction of the arms budget is anybody's guess. . . .

The real point, however, is not whether a Democratic Administration would have something different to offer us in 1976, but do the Democrats have anything different to offer us right now?

—Peter Steinfels, *Commonweal*
August 10, 1973

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The book is divided into three parts. The first, "The Church of Stone: Insensitivity," presents three priests who were all but undone by the failure of others to enter into their fantasies as into the real world. Item: a bishop's master of ceremonies treats cavalierly the lush staging for a first Mass. Shades of Father of the Bride. Item: other priests do not drop whatever irrelevancies they are engaged in to join in a march with blacks on city hall where many heads are bashed. A particularly insensitive colleague actually spends a lot of money building a basketball court for young blacks. He is meant to represent wrongheadedness. It is his surefooted common sense that comes through.

The second part, "The System: By Whose Authority?," presents three priests and a bishop who have collisions with their superiors. We are meant to see bishops as mindless tyrants whose delight is to thwart enlightened subordinates. The bishops on stage are, however, craven, patient listeners to stern lectures, docile recipients of ultimata. One begins to long for at least one instance of a well-directed buskin getting to the bottom of the matter. Needless to say, it is the real world, the abiding finitude of the human situation, their own fluctuating enthusiasms and incredible naiveté rather than the bogey of the system that do our heroes in.

Finally, in "Of Mortal Flesh: Women in their Lives," we are given three accounts of dalliance told largely without remorse or sensitivity. The narratives veer in the direction of Bacaccio. Item: a pastor keeps a woman in his bedroom and smuggles food to her as if she were some mad Bronte wife chained in an attic. The account of her is utterly generic. She has no face, no personality, not one memorable trait. She is simply the woman in the pastor's bedroom. He wonders if his assistant ever suspected. The reader begins to wonder what in the devil the assistant is up to.

This could be a dangerous book in that the reader is apt to despise these practitioners of, if not public confession, then public display, of psychological streaking, as it were. They tempt one to feel, by comparison, almost saintly. It would be more salutary for us to recognize ourselves in these men. Caricatures capture general truths. The generalized portrait which emerges is of a man who confuses moral rectitude with effecting public consequences, whose self thereby becomes scattered and diffuse, out there, a behaviorist shadow. Deeds that do not hurt others are amoral, no matter the doctrine of the Mystical Body. The message of Christ becomes diluted to pop psychology and pop theology.

Nothing is more painful than the intellectual pretensions of one all too palpably illiterate. A country pastor bedazzled by a seminar totes $300 worth of "new theology" back to his rectory. The swishier aspects of the liturgy are stressed. And there is the usual nonsense about *Humanae Vitae* with the equally usual ignorance of the ovulation method. Are priests in the pay of the pharmaceutical industry? The moral achievement of another is to discover that he's okay. What we miss is remorse, a sense of responsible inadequacy, a crying out for God, some glimmer of religion. What we want is some inchoate thirst for sanctity, an awareness that suffering and reversal are not signs of failure but the universal lot to which grace can give another valence.

Such thoughts turn inward, finally, where such thoughts belong. If embarrassment lingers—and these accounts show an appalling want of taste—that too can be turned to our profit. These men are our brothers. We have failed them, not as they imagine by squelching their pretensions, but by not puncturing them long since. Save in two cases, not even the names have been changed. To protect the innocent? To proclaim innocence? God help us all. In the good/bad old days, we were urged to pray for our priests. Whatever its intent, that is the plea of this book. If, in reading it, we weep but are not wounded, too bad for us. Unless, perhaps, we are all after all okay.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 419)

he must have been influenced by similar writings in the Northern Irish Press and by other areas of the world where hatred, prejudice and suspicion of neighbor is endemic.

Compare Novak's thoughts with those of Michael Brennan in the July-August issue of *The Sign*. His reason for Catholic political impotency is summed up on "The Bottom Line," to wit . . . "We are politically weak, ineffective witnesses to values our society desperately needs, because *we* have chosen to be." (We are responsible, not some vague "powerful minority" or "American Protestantism.")

HENRY H. BROER

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Michael Novak seems to want to have it both ways. He wants to speak in the righteous, aggrieved tones of an oppressed minority and, at the same time, flaunt all the airs of the majoritarian culture of Catholic Christendom. It is time he was reminded of some historical facts that he seems to have forgotten. It was Anglo-Saxon Protestants, not European Catholics, whose world view allowed for that pluralistic, libertarian culture in whose name Mr. Novak now purports to speak. Catholic Novak flourishes in Protestant America and gets fat grants from the WASP foundations of the Captains of Industry to do his Catholic ethnic thing. Protestant, Jewish, or, for that matter, Catholic dissenters do not similarly flourish in any society where Catholicism is the majority culture.

ROSEMARY RUETHER

Abigail McCarthy (Cont.)

In the end it does not seem to be just a matter of sex or semantics but just a very large order, an ideal far off, in a world of conferences, confrontations—and human beings who persist in being all too human.

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